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DE RUEHIL #2526/01 1571440  
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9663  
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA PRIORITY 0181  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 4227  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1334  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2101  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7163  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 8393  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5751  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1083  
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3258  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6309  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2531  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0884  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2438  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 002526

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: WHAT HAPPENED TO PRESS FREEDOM IN PAKISTAN?

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 2494

[1B](#). STATE 77589

[1C](#). ISLAMABAD 1354

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter Bodde for reasons 1.4(b), (d)

[11](#). (C) On March 24, President Musharraf told Ambassador Crocker that Musharraf intended to fire the head of the Pakistan Electronic Media Re

[12](#). (C) So why, if on March 24 the government supported press freedom, on June 1 did it begin to seriously restrict those liberties? The hy  
MAY 12: THE POWER OF LIVE TELEVISION

[13](#). (C) Live coverage of the May 12 bloodshed in Karachi, including footage of people slowly bleeding to death while ambulances were unable t  
As the live reporting progressed, journalists continuously restated rumors that the MQM city government had ordered officers off the street c  
PROTEST RALLIES: THE COVERAGE GOES ON ALL DAY

[14](#). (C) Live coverage of the various Chief Justice rallies also bothered the government. Camera angles often made crowds shouting anti-Musha  
Some government officials believe that certain reporters are purposefully manipulating coverage of the rallies to build the morale of the opp  
CRITICIZING THE ARMY: IT'S JUST NOT DONE HERE

[15](#). (C) The last straw, in terms of rallies, appears to have been a Saturday, May 26 gathering when several speakers uncharacteristically off  
SO WHO IS BEHIND THE CRACKDOWN?

[16](#). (C) In short, everyone is trying to pin the blame on someone else. Federal Minister of Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, an unofficial gover  
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Chaudrhay Shujaat Hussain told us June 1 that the military was being overly sensitive, and that they should realize that people were going  
Meanwhile, Embassy military colleagues report that their contacts claim to oppose cracking down on the press. Many military officers say th

[17](#). (C) One persistent claim -- by government officials, opposition politicians, and journalists -- is that senior military figures in ISI ar

[18](#). (C) COMMENT: In light of the serious attention this issue continues to attract, we should remain constant in reminding the government of  
BODDE